

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 OMB-01 RSR-01 IO-13 AID-20 SR-02 ORM-03 /148 W

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R 280415Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4833

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 3305

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MY, BX, UK

SUBJECT: BRUNEI REBELS IN MALAYSIA

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 3287

1. SUMMARY: GOM HAS GRANTED BRUNEI POLITICAL ESCAPEES ASYLUM ON CONDITION THEY REMAIN IN WEST MALAYSIA AND DO NOT ENGAGE IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. BRUNEI HAS RETALIATED WITH RADIO BROADCAST ACCUSING GOM OF COMPLICITY IN ESCAPE AND PROMISING FURTHER RETALIATION ACCORDING TO "CIVILIZED STANDARDS AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH TEACHINGS OF ISLAM." IN REALITY, BRUNEI OPTIONS ARE SEVERLY LIMITED AND HMG HOPES KEEP TEMPER COOL ON ALL SIDES. END SUMMARY.

2. MFA ANNOUNCED JULY 26 THAT POLITICAL ASYLUM GRANTED TO ESCAPEES, INCLUDING TWO BRUNEIAN PRISON OFFICIALS WHO AIDED DETAINEES TO FLEE. A MALAYSIAN PRISON WARDER WORKING IN BRUNEI ALSO FLED WITH GROUP. IN ADDITION TO ZAINI AND JASSIN (REFTEL), ESCAPEES INCLUDED SHEIKH SALLEH BIN SHEIKH  
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MAHMUD, BROTHER OF BRUNEI REBEL LEADER AZAHARI. ASYLUM

GRANTED ON TWO CONDITIONS: ESCAPEES MUST REMAIN IN WEST MALAYSIA AND THEY MUST REFRAIN FROM POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

3. RETALIATION BY BRUNEI TO GOM MOVE HAS THUS FAR BEEN LIMITED TO RADIO BROADCAST, REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES DAILY FOR FOUR DAYS, WHICH CHARGES "NEIGHBORING STATE" OF COMPLICITY IN ESCAPE. ACCORDING BRUNEI ANNOUNCEMENT, DETAINEES ESCAPED ON JULY 12, AIDED BY BRUNEIAN AND MALAYSIAN WARDERS, AND FLED TO BRUNEI-CLAIMED LIMBANG TERRITORY WHERE THEY WERE TAKEN TO "NEIGHBORING COUNTRY WHERE...WHOLE PLAN WAS HATCHED." DESPATCH ALSO REFERRED TO ESCAPE IN NOV 1972 OF THREE PRISONERS FROM SAME BRUNEI DETENTION CAMP WHO WERE LATER RETURNED BY GOM. THESE SAME PRISONERS REESCAPED IN ZAINI GROUP, THUS LEADING BRUNEI TO CHARGE THAT THEY ORIGINALLY RETURNED IN ORDER TO LEAD LARGER ESCAPE. BRUNEI ALSO PROMISED RETALIATORY ACTION AGAINST THOSE RESPONSIBLE BUT WITH VAGUE CAVEAT NOTED IN PARA ONE. IN CLOSING, PEOPLE OF BRUNEI ARE URGED TO UNITE AGAINST "NEIGHBOR WHO HAS HITHERTO BEEN THOUGHT TO BE SINCERE BUT WHO HAS NOW SHOWN TO BE TREACHEROUS" DESPITE COMMON RELIGION, WAY OF LIFE AND ALTHOUGH BRUNEI WISHES LIVE IN PEACE AND HARMONY WITH NEIGHBORS.

4. GOM RESPONSE TO BRUNEI BROADCAST HAS BEEN LOW-KEY. MFA SPOKESMAN JULY 27 SAID THAT GOM ACTION IN GRANTING ASYLUM NOT CONNECTED WITH INTERNAL POLITICS IN BRUNEI. HE ALSO REJECTED IDEA THAT ANY OTHER NATION COULD IMPINGE ON GOM'S PREROGATIVE TO GRANT ASYLUM UNDER PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW.

5. ACCORDING UK HICOM OFFICER, BRUNEI'S OPTIONS ARE IN FACT VIRTUALLY NIL. GOM GRANTING OF ASYLUM HAS MADE ACADEMIC EXTRADITION (EVEN THOUGH THIS WOULD BE LEGALLY QUESTIONABLE UNDER UK LAW) OR DIPLOMATIC REQUEST FOR RETURN OF DETAINEES. RE POSSIBILITIES OF DIRECT ACTION, BRITISH OFFICERS IN BRUNEI ARMY OR GURKHAS COULD NOT BE USED TO INVADE LIMBANG, ALTHOUGH SOME (THOUGH NOT VERY GREAT) POSSIBILITY EXISTS FOR BRUNEI TO SEND IRREGULARS OR TERRORISTS INTO BRUNEI-CLAIMED AREA. OTHER TYPES OF RETALIATORY ACTION (E.G., CUTTING OFF AIRLINE FLIGHTS FROM MALAYSIAN TERRITORY) ALSO NOT LIKELY BECAUSE GOM COULD SEVER TELEX AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS AS CONFIDENTIAL

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COUNTER-MOVE. IN SHORT, BRUNEI'S MAIN RECOURSE IS TO RHETORIC AND HMG HOPES GOM SENSITIVITIES WILL NOT BE INFLAMED BY BRUNEI ACCUSATIONS AND THREATS TO CAPTURE LIMBANG. HMG OF COURSE WILL ATTEMPT SOOTHE FEELINGS ALL AROUND, THOUGH IT CLEARLY DOES NOT ENJOY BEING MAN IN MIDDLE.

6. COMMENT: AT THIS POINT, GRANTING OF ASYLUM IS FAIT ACCOMPLI AND PROSPECT SEEMS TO BE FOR HEIGHTENING OF RHE-

TORIC AND, ON GOM SIDE, FORBEARANCE OF BRUNEIAN EMOTIONAL  
OUTBURSTS.  
LYDMAN

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 28 JUL 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** hilburpw  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973KUALA03305  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS LYDMAN  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** KUALA LUMPUR  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Legacy Key:** link1973/newtext/t1973076/aaaaadvr.tel  
**Line Count:** 118  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 73 KUALA LUMPUR 3287  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** hilburpw  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 28 NOV 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <28-Nov-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <21-Dec-2001 by hilburpw>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** BRUNEI REBELS IN MALAYSIA  
**TAGS:** PFOR, MY, BX, UK  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005